



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Norfolk District

News Release

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Norfolk District
803 Front Street
Norfolk, VA 23510-1096

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 11, 2007, #07-22

Contacts: Terry McCann, Public Affairs, (757) 201-7606 or (Cell) 757-679-2408

Investigation of object's source to occur

Army Corps removes Intracoastal Waterway obstruction

NORFOLK, VA -- On Saturday, Nov, 10, at approximately 9:30 p.m., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and contracted crews from Portsmouth's Crofton Industries succeeded in locating, bringing to the surface and placing on a barge a large object taken from the Intracoastal Waterway approximately three miles north of the Pungo Ferry Bridge. Once the Corp's contractor had removed the debris, a Corps survey team that had been standing by throughout the day surveyed the area to ensure there were no remaining hazards. Following the final survey, the Coast Guard was notified that the hazards had been removed and that a previously-issued Notice to Mariners, warning of the hazard and the channel's restricted use, could now be cancelled.

Corps of Engineers Norfolk District Commander Col. Dionysios "Dan" Anninos lauded the work by the personnel of Crofton Industries, the Corps' Norfolk District team and Sector Hampton Roads of the 5th U.S. Coast Guard District's as "a great team effort!"

Corps to investigate source of obstruction

With the obstruction clear and the debris available for examination, the Corps of Engineers will now conduct an informal investigation into the source of the obstruction. "Safe and uninterrupted navigation is absolutely critical to this region and to our nation, said Anninos. "Therefore, as the supervisor of this region's navigation channels, I intend to work closely with local and federal enforcement partners to investigate the origin of the obstruction which closed the waterway to commercial traffic for three days, damaged the 'Spirit of Nantucket' and placed many lives in an unsafe situation."

"I must emphasize that it is mariners' responsibility to immediately report to authorities any obstructions or hazards to navigation that they cause or become aware of," Anninos continued.

The large, approximately 40 by 14 foot object, believed to be either a bulkhead or part of a barge, is suspected of having caused a gash in the hull of the Spirit of Nantucket cruise ship on Nov. 8. The object was taken to Crofton Industries' salvage yard in Portsmouth for further examination and identification to assist the Coast Guard and the Corps in their respective investigations into what caused the damage to the 'Spirit of Nantucket' and the origin of the obstruction.